

A Study on the Colonial Social System of Women in India

Alka Shukla^{1*} Dr. Sachin Tiwari²

¹ Research Scholar, Swami Vivekanand University, Sagar (M.P.)

² Professor and Head Department of History, Swami Vivekanand University, Sagar (M.P.)

Abstract – The section discusses the social role of women in colonial India. In this paper I tried to stress that women's role is a social system and defines their interaction with others. In this segment, I have tried, with a series of instances, in particular practices, to explore the prevalent social structures, which paint a multi-layered image of the woman's social dynamics and expose the complicated systemic arrangements in society regarding women's status. The explanations for the low status of women in India have been the presence of social evils such as satiety, child marriage, slavery, compulsory widowhood, lack of schooling, purdah method etc. In this background, I also tried to illustrate why, in different areas and cultures, the role of women differs from community to community in various geographies and from tribal to caste-oriented communities.

Keywords – Colonialism, Social System, Feminism

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INTRODUCTION

Legislatures also helped women develop in India since the very start of British rule. The status of Indian women was deplorable until the British landed in India. The explanations for the low status of women in India have been the presence of social evils such as satiety, child marriage, slavery, compulsory widowhood, lack of schooling, purdah method etc. They have been deprived certain dignity in the social realm and are neglected by all other human interaction. Both child marriage and the purdah tradition culminated in women's low literacy rates. They had been discouraged from taking part in civil, political and religious activities. They became so unhappy that they did not grasp their own independence and self-sufficiency.

The British became the first authorities to unify the world as a whole economically. Many traditions and structures could not depend on justification, so they had to be dismissed. Therefore, the Indian culture experienced major changes under British control. The government operated steadily and was willing to provide people who desired social reform with an alternate form of life, with the implementation of a modern model of school structure, through the adoption of progressive social rules.

Because of British mindset and methods in the right way, the disgraceful condition started to improve. The 19th-century social change revolutions were the

product of Western philosophies and the British influence.

PROHIBITION OF FEMALE INFANTICIDE

The first significant social change carried out by the Government of the East India Corporation was the elimination of the unusual inhumane ritual of the infanticide to dump new-born children into the sea at the Ganges mouth or the killing of young girls by denying the appropriate diet or contamination of mother-infantile breasts. The British disapproved this heartless native tradition by Regulation XXI of 1795, Regulation III of 1804 and Act VIII of 1870.

Abolition of Sati (1829)

Voluntary funeral death in northern India was identified as sati. The custom's root is rather distant. The initial rituals were dubbed anumarana. A method of religious suicide was identified as Anumarana.

The activity was outlawed in territory occupied by European powers by the end of the 18th century. Sati outlawed and restricted the activity in Goa by 1515.9 The Dutch and the French restricted it respectively in Chinsura and Pondicherry (1510). The British, who controlled the mainland at the time, and the Danes, who kept Tranquebar and Serampore 's tiny territories, made it until the 19th century.

Individual British officers attempted in the 18th century to forbid the procedure but not with the assistance of the English East India Corporation. In Calcutta alone, the first official British prohibition was enforced. Practice in the neighboring areas proceeded. William Carey and William Wilberforce launched camps in India, against Sati by the end of the 18th century, and pressurized the corporation in 1813 to outlaw sati. Around 1812, Raja Rammohan Roy (1774-1833), the Bengali Reformer, launched his own agitation against the tradition. He was inspired by his past of being compelled to commit Sati, his own sister-in-law.

The East India Corporation and the subsequent British representatives nevertheless accepted the concept of 'non-interference'; gradual and 'cautious' strategy were pursued while modifying the informal, juridical status of indigenous citizens. A considerable number of illuminated Indians and the British, headed by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Lorra, were attracted to the pitiful condition of the widows who were compelled to satiate. Despite the heavy resistance, a historic resolution was released on December 14, 1829,¹³ which punished sati for guilty murder, or both of it. "In addition, it was established that the individuals who assisted in either event, including in volunteer sati, were liable for guilty homicide.

Widow Re-marriage

Widow marriage during the Vedic era was not forbidden. According to Manu, after her husband's death a wife can also not take the name of another other and lead a life dedicated to her spouse, the same way as a woman is faithful to her husband.

Widow marriage started to be banned after the 10th century A.D. Widows were treated as a family threat. The mutual rights were withheld and wretched lives had to be endured in solitude. They did not blend with other married people and had to endure an unhappy life. The only choice was to perish as they burnt alongside their dead spouses on their funeral pyre. Many widows prefer sati than wretched lives. At this period sati was developed customs.¹⁸ In social context, all privileges were deprived and marginalized.

The wife was ill-treated by her attorneys and family as her husband's robotic destructor. She should never look silly or wear flashy clothing or lights. During the day and night, she had to drudge and was the object of all sorts of insolence²⁰ from other housewives and servants. The disaster became all the more intense when the widow became a child. To better their lot the champion for widow re-marriage Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar organized a powerful movement for widow remarriage which resulted in the promulgation of the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act XV of 1856. It was passed to lift all moral obstacles to Hindu widows' re-marriage.

Hindu Widow Remarriage Act XV of 1856

Act XV 1856, generally recognized as the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act of 1856, addresses the status of widow descendants whose marriages are legalized. 'No marriage could be declared unconstitutional or any issue called unlawful unless a woman was already married or married and was deceased at the time of the marriage.'²¹ It also claimed that after re-marriage, the widow's rights in her deceased husband's property must stop. It said nothing for a lady who didn't have any issues. It argued that since her remarriage she had no access to property to which she would otherwise be entitled. The remarriage of the wife is ordered to be sufficient for all weddings which are valid marriages. With the consent of her father and his absence, the minor wife was permitted to remarry. Indeed, without respect to the above criteria, the Court was able to render any union unconstitutional. For a broad full-age child, her own permission was sufficient for the second marriage.

But the orthodox Hindus published a pamphlet which claimed that the shastras declined to marry their widows. Vidyasagar urged the Indians not to be misled. This is improved by the establishment

On 4 October 1855 Vidyasagar forwarded a plea to the Calcutta government for 987 persons²³ asking for a "legislation to remove all legal obstacles to the marriage of Hindu widows and to recognize the validity of all such marriages. The statute was thus agreed solemnly to relieve the woes incurred by child marriage and the baby wife. This Act married the first wife in 1856 in Calcutta the same year.

The horrible condition of the orthodox Hindu widows helped modern-day progressive reformers. They strongly supported widows and secured federal funds to support them by law.

Enfranchisement of Women

The democratic emancipation of women would not stop with simple engagement. In addition to participating in the progressive campaigns, the freedom to vote for their preferred politicians and to engage in the elections often relies on them. At the beginning of the 20th century, certain privileges were not given to Indian people. According to traditions and norms, collective involvement and the exercising of democratic influence is primarily a human environment.

In the first half of the 20th century, proposals for women's vote largely relied on the belief that women were the equivalent of men. It was because people did so because they felt men falsely judged the true position of the situation, and also because people were harmed when they could not gain franchise. The liberation campaign of women, which steadily started in the mid-19th century,

occurred during the 20th century, especially after World War I, owing to an increasingly educated woman. Women's involvement in the national war effort gave them the opportunity to franchise.

Mahatma Gandhi set the tempo for the empowerment of Indian women in all walks of life during World War I (1914-1918). Yet Gandhiji did not accept women's civic involvement.

The Indian Reform Act of 1921 for the first time extended a limited portion of the Indian community and included women as well. Wifehood was granted the freedom to vote and a variety of seats were allocated particularly for women during the control of the Justice Party between 1920 and 1937.

Before the creation of the Ministry of the Justice of the Party in 1920, the Women's Conference was held to call for a women's suffrage 32. According to the resolution adopted on 10 May 1921, the Government of Madras is pleased to state that "Women alone shall not be eligible for registration on the electoral position of the constituency of the Legislative Council of Madras." Madras was the first presidential presidency at British.

In the British era, the culture, community and rule of Hindu women were vastly enhanced in contrast to the Muslim period. Women sought by way of learned people to eliminate societal inequalities through statute. The effort by corporate representatives has contributed to the introduction of women in positions such as franchise.

"Enfranchisement of women" often predicted such claims that would proceed, as the following quote indicates, to split the proponents for women's rights into so-called "difference" feminism and "equality" feminism.

As most famous movements do. This could be severely delayed by its followers' blunders. Checked against the common standard of public meetings, the discourses of the Convention [1850 Worcester] have a surprising logical preponderance over the declamatory aspect, yet there are some anomalies and matters which cannot be taken rationally into account have been inserted into the resolutions. The resolution therefore enumerates as a fourth demand head anything under the name of "social and spiritual union" and "a way of voicing the highest moral and spiritual points of view on justice," with a similar verbiage which serves solely to invoke the simplicity of women's demands for fair schooling, industrial pursuit and political freedom. What is desired is fair protection for women, equitable entry to all social privileges; not a separate role, a kind of nostalgic priesthood. . The power of the cause rests in the assistance of those motivated by fact and philosophy; attempting to persuade them by thoughts, which are absurd in purpose, and

contradictory with the concept on which this campaign is formed, means placing a good cause on a level with a weak one.

The Women's Rights Reports were taken from the Westminster and the International Quarterly Assessments for July 1851.

Child Marriage

Child marriages and the abolition of widow marriages were the two societal tragedies that caught the interest of citizens with revolutionary minds in India in the 19th century A.D. Child marriage may be clearly described as marriage at an age where the boy and the girl meet at the age of teens. In the first, the father of the child agreed to marry his daughter early so that she would not carry his responsibility. The tradition aimed at preventing the danger of the girl being forcefully captured by a member of an alien tribe. It was often assumed that the boy born during the first cycle of the marriage would be a spiritual infant, which was the explanation why orthodox people desired a boy of spiritual inclination.

The Stri-Dharma claims that women's economic equality is greater than their civil liberty and democratic suffrage. Hunger is one of the strongest powers in the world, and it is driven mainly by economics than political or social sciences. The role of women depends on the economic policies and goals of the state. Women's status often depends on their economic independence in India. The idea of getting money makes mankind happy. Women's economic empowerment consists of two essential elements, ownership and occupation. In brief, the right to land and the right to work are the two primary aspects of women's economic equality in India.

By the end of the nineteenth century the situation in Tamil Nadu was worst because of its economic slavery. Property relationships within families relied on woman's inequalities. The girls and women had no claim either to their ancestors' property or to their husbands' property. They had to live in a dependent society. And after a husband's passing, the wife was not even granted any share in the property for her life. Thanks to women's analphabetism, they do not obtain good work. Therefore, women's role in the field of economic growth was neglected⁶³.

Women have not known their economic independence since time immemorial and their thoughts of heading for work were treated as tabus on the grounds of custom, morality and chastity. Fundamentalists and male chauvinists curbed their desire through dogmas, which rejected the liberation of women. While the arrival of Christian missionaries and their educational scheme created a small shift, the role of women stayed unchanged

due to their dependability on men. They recognized the need for property protection at this juncture. They increased their desire for economic equality with the aid of liberal minded citizens.

Adoption

Adoption was also a challenge that was really appealing. During the husband's life a woman should not adopt even with his permission. A bachelor or widower was eligible to adopt. An individual can adopt, regardless of his wife's consent. A widow may adopt for her husband's sake. A widow may adopt in Madras, Bombay, and Bengal, underneath the authority of her husband before his lifetime.

Except in the absent of the authority of her husband, a widow can adopt the widow in Madras with the consent of individual coparcener or sapindas. The approval of the sapindas is required because of the widow's incapacity. The High Court in Madras upheld the adoption by the dancing child of a daughter.

The Hindu Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 abolished all procedural hurdles relating to the re-hearing of the Hindu widows. It was supposed to rid them of their moral incapacity to we'd. The Act ruled that no marriage was void to a woman whose spouse was dead at the time of her second marriage.

Marriage Reforms

The Native Marriages Legislation of 1872 enacted by the Keshav Chandrasan helped to eradicate early marriages, slavery and widow marriages, and inter-caste marriages. As far as partnerships were involved, the civil responsibilities became vague and passed from one extreme to the other. They opposed partnerships with people of lower grades to protect their dominant rank and dominance. Anuloma was thereby banned as a form of inter-caste marriage and thus constitutionally unconstitutional. In this case it was objected and disapproved of by the orthodox Hindus in 1862, when an intercasts marriage was solemnized under the auspices of the Brahmo Samaj and was deemed unconstitutional. But it opened the way for the Native Marriages Act to be implemented

It gave consent to inter-caste marriage and divorce, prohibited numerous conditions, and recommended 14 and 18 as the minimum age of marriage for a girl and a male respectively.

Likewise, due to the efforts of members of Arya Samaj, it was announced that marriage could be conducted between any two Hindus, without constraints on Gotra or Sapind, regardless of their castes or sub-castes. The Arya Samaj Validating Act of 1937 considered certain marriages as legitimate marriages. It was also a slow move towards equity and enabled women to become better. However, the limitations on the grounds of Gotra, Parivara and

Sub-Castes persisted unabated. To throw away those difficult circumstances, the Hindu Marriage Disability Exclusion Act of 1946 was adopted. More initiatives were taken in the Independent India focused on such reform initiatives.

The wife's social standing in the UK has increased with the advent of women's schooling and the rise in the marriage age.

Initially, Bengal Law XXI of 1795 took measures to combat women's infanticide and strongly cautioned the perpetrators. The 1872 Act of Native Marriages abolished early marriages, penalized slavery, and allowed widow marriages and inter-caste marriages for those who wished to break. At the beginning of the 20th century, the recognition of Hindu reformers made it evident that the alarmingly illiterate existence of the uninformed section of society in relation to marriages was to be modified. Therefore, the Marriages Restriction Act was enacted in 1926. It said that a man under 18 years old marrying a girl under 14 years was a crime. This was a groundbreaking move to incorporate age limits in the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 in India after independence.

The Indian Succession Act of 1925 provided the inheritance of married spouses under the Separate Marriages Statute, which put focus on divorce and the non-state succession⁹² on women in every community.

The Indian Christian Marriage Act of 1872 mentioned Indian Christians' relationships. It was based on a prior Act called Act V of 1865, which established the age limit of seventeen for contracting parties. The Anand Marriage Act 1909, referring to the Sikhs, extended in India ⁹⁵ However, this was based on the faith of the Sikhs and referred exclusively to the Sikhs. The Arya Marriage Certification Act of 1937 (Act XIX of 1937) also recognised that intermarriages of a Hindus community identified as Arya Samajists were legitimate, despite.

The Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Implementation Act, 1937, was enunciated on 7th October 1937.⁹⁷ Likewise the Breakup of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939, was governing the conflicting conditions of Muslim marriages. The Indian Proof Act, 1872 governed the inconsistency of musomania marriages.

The Nambudri Act of 1932 and Madras Marumakkattayam Act of 1932, Madras Act XXII of 1932; and Madras Marumakkattayam Act of 1932

It was stated that undocumented children are treated as linked to their mothers and to each other. This act takes care of the male sex only and does not apply to females. In this context, it should

be remembered that the Indian Succession Act of 1925 also gave women significance.

Divorce

The rejection of marriages that prevailed among Muslims, Christians, Parsis and Hindus will be observed. The wife was implicitly granted the right to divorce even at the point of entering into the marital contract. For e.g., a Muslim woman may repudiate her marriage arbitrarily. In the case of divorced individuals, the rules of the Indian Divorce Act indicate gender incapacity in terms of the reasons for divorce.

The Indian Divorce Act IV of 1869 arranged for the lady and her children's care, upbringing and schooling. The Parsi marriages and divorce Act of 1936 emphasized the registration of Parsi marriages and discussed the details of divorce. Registrations and sub registrars were named by the Act of 1872 in order to resolve potential issues such as divorce and dissolution. Copies of registered cases had to be submitted once a quarter to the Registrar General for Pregnancies, Deaths and Marriages. Such records avoided marital issues. For e.g., a single act of adultery by the wife is a legal reason for the spouse demanding divorce.

Except in the case of a wife's divorce claim, she must assert the husband's intimate partnership. "The husband's abuse, sodomy, or bestiality commission may be a reason to seek a divorce decree. "The Act was similar to Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs.

The Hindu Women's Right to Property Act, introduced in 1937, bestowed more fewer rights to property on Hindu women than they had before. This was the beginning of a significant piece of legislation that included groundbreaking reforms in the field of Hindu family rule, coparcenary, separation, legacy etc. These rules not only introduced citizens to existence but also enabled them to seek more privileges during the intervening centuries.

Abolition of Devadasi system

In 1927, Venkatratnam Iyer presented the Devadasi Resolution, which Muthulakshmi Reddy seconded. In the law, it was proposed that land grants would better their lives.

The legislation was signed on 31 January 1930 in the face of considerable difficulties. The bill entitled "A Bill to prohibit the devotion of women to the Hindu temple of the presidency of Madras (Bill No. 5, 1930)," was initiated by S. Muthulakshmi Reddi on 24 January 1930 (1886-1968). The Bill entered into effect on 31 January 1930 and was reported in the Fort St. George Gazette of 28 January 1930. Actions like this show that, while the British are hesitant to

deal with Indians' personal lives, they are ready to eradicate social problems by legitimate means.

Measures have since been taken to discourage the Devadasi system's violence against women. In conjunction with the Bombay Devadasi Protection Act X of 1934, the Madras Devadasi Act XXXI of 1947 was passed in Madras. The consecration of a woman to the temple was considered invalid with or without her permission. No woman committed shall be found incompetent to enter into a marriage notwithstanding traditions to the contrary. Both ceremonial and cultural ceremonies such as melam, dance or music is found unconstitutional and unlawfull.

Since the temples were called devaradiyar, they were regarded in the temples as workers and slaves to gods. They are the kings and the rich enjoyed their patronage. They were assigned different streets and buildings. The Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act, 1926 dealt with religious dedications and endowments. It has been noticed that such a commitment has produced both men and women with immorality, promiscuity and irresponsibility. It can then be abolished in the interests of people and community.

Since the Devadasis family's loss of royal security and the fall of the throne, they were in tough times and morality seems to have diminished. They come into the everyday and profane universe and became hostages of the profanity of the laughing wealthy. Devadasis, who could not bear a societal ostracism, left the career at this crucial juncture.

In the early decades of the 20th century, attempts were made in order to prevent such blatant mockery of a single category of people to enact laws to eliminate the unwelcome old habit of people in Hindu temples. This question was discussed in the House by the representatives of the Imperial Legislative Council. Around 1905 and 1910 there were several efforts to remedy the problem. Although this move did not work due to the First World War (1914-1918). Hari Singh Gour passed a resolution in 1922, but there was no follow-up. In addition, Central Assembly representatives such as Shiv Rao and A.P. Patro supported the devadasi agency. On September 12, 1927, V. Ramadas Pandulu submitted a resolution to deny the Devadasis expenditures in a temple. But it was refused by the nation.

ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS FOR WOMEN

The Ministry of Women's and Child Development formed itself in 1985 to provide a much-needed impetus for women's and children 's growth. The

Department of Women and Child Welfare has been established as a ministry effective.

Smt. Krishna Tirath, Minister of State (IC), Shri Prem Narain, Secretary and Shri Sudhir Kumar, Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Women and Children's Development, are the leaders of the Ministry of Women and Child Development. The ministry's output is regulated by the seven offices.

Seven autonomous organizations, the Ministry for Women and Child Development;

- National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)
- Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)
- National Institute of Public Co-operation and Child Development (NIPCCD)
- National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW)
- Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB)
- National Commission for Women (NCW)
- Rashtriya Mahila Khosh (RMK)

CONCLUSION

The past of the diminishing status of women under corporate rule was also the past of state looking for power and redefinition of working standards. Colonial viewpoints have clearly neglected past activities such as the adoption and application of traditional laws already introduced in India. Through pushing the ethnocentric philosophy to render local customs inferior and their traditions and philosophies better, the colonial government imposed its power. Colonists promoted the idea that they were morally dominant through taking ownership over land, jobs and also the climate. Capitalist patterns and strategies regulated conventional employment and culture constructions. While men were more frequently actively interested in colonial policy on labor policies, shifts in the social system and separation of labor often specifically impacted women. The transition of customs left people with the feeling of not having proper awareness and cultural experience.

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Corresponding Author

Alka Shukla*

Research Scholar, Swami Vivekanand University, Sagar (M.P.)